Ocean Farming in Connecticut
Meet Stonington Kelp Company

Tuesday, Feb 23rd | 7-8pm | Zoom | Registration required
Click to register

Stonington Kelp Co. is owned and operated by Suzie and Jay, and is one of the largest commercial seaweed farms in the state of Connecticut selling food grade sugar kelp to local restaurants and shops. Join Suzie to learn more about the fascinating business of sustainable ocean farming taking place right here in Connecticut.

Suzie Flores is a former market development executive turned kelp farmer. When not farming, Suzie engages in outreach education around the sustainability of seaweed farming and works to support the development of an emerging blue economy in the Northeast. She has been featured on WNPR’s Seasoned.

Prior to the program you will receive an invitation to the Zoom meeting.

Where Do We Go From Here?
Conversations on Race

Tuesday, Feb 16th | 7-8:30pm
Zoom | Registration required
Click to register

The death of George Floyd on May 25 of last year reignited protests and discussion around police brutality, white supremacy, and systemic racism. Join us for an open and empathetic conversation about race, community, and opportunities for change and healing. All are welcome.

This month, we will be discussing race in schools. We encourage participants to share their experiences. Recommended reading COMING SOON.

Facilitators: Duane Samuel, Wallingford Public Schools, Sharon Rabera, and Leah Farrell of the Wallingford Public Library

Prior to the program you will receive an invitation to the Zoom meeting.
How It Works...
We humans are so captivated by the idea of the end of the world, we continue to tell and retell stories of humanity’s apocalyptic demise and what comes afterward. The apocalypse comes in many different mediums including books, games, shows, and films. It also comes in many different flavors such as suspenseful, contemplative, adventurous, or comedic.

In this year’s March Madness competition, we’ve put together a sampling of many fictional apocalypses. Some stories have have even been retold in different forms. We’ve listed the original work in the descriptions on the bracket sheet, but some works have been adapted for screen multiple times. Think of the adaptation you are most familiar with or like best when filling in your bracket.

In February —
Fill in a March Madness bracket with your predictions of which apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic stories will win by popularity in a head-to-head match-up and submit it to the library before February 28th. Don’t forget to include a winner! Make a copy for yourself if you want to follow along!

In March —
Each day in March vote for your favorite apocalypse story through match-ups posted on our Facebook and Twitter pages. The winning story will move onto the next round.

Outcome —
The three people who most closely predict the final outcome on March 31st will each win a $25 Visa gift card.

Download and fill-out your bracket here. Send your completed predictions to Chris Ciemniewski, Public Services Librarian at cciemniewski@wallingfordlibrary.
In *Broken Homes*, the 4th book in his Rivers of London series, Ben Aaronovitch writes of a woman who “in the winter…curls up around a good book and dreams away the cold.” As we push through the end of January and on into February, there are an unusually large number of novels scheduled for publication, almost as if the publishers anticipated our need to snuggle under a blanket with a hot drink and a good book. The suggestions below offers something for everyone:

**Exit** by Belinda Bauer — A literal-minded widower who discretely volunteers to help terminally ill people die by assisted suicide makes a terrible mistake that turns him into a fugitive.

**Finlay Donovan Is Killing It** by Elle Cosimano — When a struggling suspense novelist and single mom is mistaken for a contract killer and is asked to kill a problem husband, she discovers that crime in real life is a lot harder than writing it in fiction.

**Girl A** by Abigail Dean — After she inherits the house she left to escape her abusive parents, a woman tries to renovate the property into a safe place for her traumatized siblings.

**Flowers of Darkness** by Tatiana de Rosnay — A novelist trying to recover after a nasty divorce moves into an artist enclave in Paris and starts to wonder about the agenda of the people who founded it.

**The Four Winds** by Kristin Hannah — A Depression-era woman makes an impossible choice between staying on the Dust Bowl-ravaged farm she loves in Texas and pursuing an unknown future in California.

**The Kitchen Front** by Jennifer Ryan — A young widow, a kitchen maid, the wife of a wealthy but unkind man and a trained chef compete for a once-in-a-lifetime spot hosting a BBC cooking program during World War II.

**Maggie Lane** by Lucy Atkins — When the eight-year old daughter of the Master of one of Oxford’s colleges disappears in the middle of the night, the police turn to the child’s Scottish nanny for help.

**The Mission House** by Carys Davies — After taking refuge in a mission house in a remote hill town in India, an Englishman bonds with a Padre’s daughter against the backdrop of escalating religious tensions.

**My Year Abroad** by Chang-Rae Lee — An American college student’s life is transformed by a Chinese-American businessman who takes him on a series of whimsical, heartbreaking and dark adventures throughout Asia.

**No One Is Talking About This** by Patricia Lockwood — After she becomes famous for her social media posts, a woman starts to suffer from existential anxieties as she learns the customs and fears of her fans around the world.

*The (Other) You* by Joyce Carol Oates — A short-story collection that explores the thoughts of a writer, a prisoner and a student about how their lives might have unfolded differently. (Joyce Carol Oates has a new poetry collection called *American Melancholy* out in February too).

*The Rain Heron* by Robbie Arnott — A woman’s quiet life is upended when an army unit comes to the mountains to search for a legendary creature called the rain heron, a mythical bird said to be able to change the weather.

*The Smash-Up* by Ali Benjamin — Unnerved by his wife’s activism, a once-successful businessman begins questioning everything in his life.

*The Survivors* by Jane Harper — Haunted by guilt for a mistake in his youth, a man returns to his coastal hometown and his struggling parents, and then the discovery of a body on the beach exposes hidden secrets.

*We Run the Tides* by Vendela Vida — The disappearance of a teen in the aftermath of a fight that may or may not have been witnessed exposes dark community secrets.

Also of note this month are the 23rd installment in the Inspector Ian Rutledge series by Charles Todd (*A Fatal Lie*), the 7th Slough House spy novel by Mick Herron (*Slough House*), the 2nd Treadstone thriller by Joshua Hood (*The Treadstone Exile*), the 14th Charles Lenox mystery by Charles Finch (*An Extravagant Death*), the 52nd installment in the In Death series by J.D. Robb (*Faithless in Death*), the 36th Alex Delaware novel by Jonathan Kellerman (*Serpine*), the 15th Easy Rawlins mystery by Walter Mosley (*Blood Grove*) and new novels by Alex Berenson (*The Power Couple*), Michael Kortya (*Never Far Away*), Susan Mallory (*The Vineyard at Painted Moon*) and C.J. Tudor (*The Burning Girls*).
**Story Walk with Mrs. Stowe**

*Wednesday, Feb 10th | 9:30am OR 1:30pm*

*Marcus Cooke Park | Ages 3-5*

Registration Required

Join retired kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Stowe, to find hidden pages from a book along a trail through the woods and learn about nature along the way!

Meet under the pavilion at Marcus Cooke Park in Wallingford. For more information, contact Helen Stowe at (203) 848-7113.

All participants ages 2 and up will be required to wear face masks.

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**Passport Pals: Ghana**

*Tuesday, Feb 2nd | 4pm | Ages 5+ | Zoom Registration Required*  

Click here to register

We’ll travel to Ghana to learn about some Ghanaian traditions, food, culture, and make a craft. The library will provide most of the craft supplies. From home, you will need scissors, markers, and crayons. Once you’ve registered, beginning Tuesday, Jan. 23rd, you can call (203) 284-6436 to schedule Park ‘n Pickup.

**The Roots of Black Music in America**

*Thursday, Feb 4th | 4pm | Ages 5+ | Zoom Registration Required*  

Click here to register

Sing and clap with musician Karlus Trapp for “The Roots of Black Music in America,” a 100-year journey through time to hear, experience, and learn about the music of America’s Black musical giants.

**Virtual Programs**

For Zoom programs, you will receive the Zoom link via email the day of the program.

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**Nutmeg Book Group: Restart by Gordon Korman**

*Thursday, Feb 11th | 4pm | Ages 9+ | Zoom Registration Required*  

Click here to register

Join Miss Alyssa to discuss a 2021 Intermediate Nutmeg nominee. This month, we will be reading and discussing the book, *Restart* by Gordon Korman. Once you’ve registered, you can call (203) 284-6436 if you’d like us to reserve a copy of the book for you while supplies last. Restart is also available to check out digitally on Hoopla and Overdrive (click the cover to see it in the catalog).

**Family Book Group: How to Train Your Dragon by Cressida Crowell**

*Available to pick up beginning Tuesday, Feb 16th | Ages 8+ | While Supplies Last*  

Click here to register

Read a book together as a family! Each kit will include a book, discussion guide, and craft activity. From home, you will need scissors and tape.

**Kindness Club: Heart Bombs**

*Available to pick up beginning Monday, Feb 1st | All ages | While Supplies Last*

This month, let’s do random acts of kindness by telling people you appreciate them. Write down what makes that person awesome on a heart and put it on their lawn! Kits will include hearts and wooden stakes. From home you will need permanent markers and strong tape.

**Special Event!**

**Story Walk with Mrs. Stowe**

*Wednesday, Feb 10th | 9:30am OR 1:30pm*

*Marcus Cooke Park | Ages 3-5*

Registration Required

Join retired kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Stowe, to find hidden pages from a book along a trail through the woods and learn about nature along the way! Meet under the pavilion at Marcus Cooke Park in Wallingford. For more information, contact Helen Stowe at (203) 848-7113. All participants ages 2 and up will be required to wear face masks.

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**Take & Make Kits**

Kits are available weekly in the Children’s Room on a first come, first served basis unless otherwise noted. Wallingford residents may reserve kits to be picked up through Park ‘n Pick Up by calling (203) 284-6436, beginning the first day the kit is available.

**Choose Interact Club Presents: Reading Buddies**

*Friday, Feb 19th | 7pm | Grades K-2*

Google Meet | Registration Required  

Click here to register

Reading Buddies is a program run by high school volunteers from Choate’s Interact Club for Wallingford students in grades K-2. Students will hear a few fun stories read aloud by our enthusiastic volunteers. Participants should plan to have a book with them to share. Please join us for a fun and cozy Friday night! The link to the Google Meet will be emailed out on the day of the program.
**Teacher Book Requests**
Wallington Public School teachers are encouraged to fill out a [teacher request form](#). Our Children’s Librarians will do their best to fill your request within 48 hours. We will then contact you to schedule a Park ‘n Pickup appointment.

**Family Book Bundle Requests**
Please use [this form](#) to submit a request for a general selection of children’s books for your family. Our Children’s Librarians will do their best to fill your request within 48 hours. We will then contact you to schedule a Park ‘n Pickup appointment. Requests for specific titles should be placed through the library’s catalog or by calling the Children’s Room at (203)284-6436.

**Story Time Songs & Rhymes**
New videos post on Mondays Jan 4th–Feb. 8th | Ages 0-5
View on [YouTube](#) & [Our Website](#)
Do you want to practice story time songs and rhymes over and over? The children’s librarians have created a story time playlist on our library’s YouTube channel! New videos will be available every week during our seasonal sessions.

**Weekly Story Time Classes on Facebook Live**
Can’t tune in live? Story times will be available on our library’s Facebook page until 9pm on the day they air.

**Baby Time**
Ages 0-1 | Wednesdays Feb 3rd & 10th | 10:30am
Learn how to support baby’s growth and development through songs, puppets, rhymes, and books.

**Toddler Time**
Ages 1-2 | Mondays Feb 1st & 8th | 10:30am
Toddler have a chance to practice following directions, develop fine motor skills, and expand their vocabulary.

**Preschool Story Time**
Ages 3-5 | Tuesdays Feb 2nd & 9th | 10:30am
Books, puppets, and songs will reinforce your child’s pre-reading skills through repetition and rhyme.

**Bookworms**
Ages 5+ | Thursdays Feb 4th & 11th | 1:30pm
This story time is designed just for big kids! We will share some longer books and most importantly, have lots of fun!

**Scholastic Teachables**
A great resource for teachers, homeschooling families, and virtual learners that includes lesson plans and curriculum based activities.
[Access teachables here](#).

**Hoopla Staff Picks!**
If you are viewing this newsletter online, you can click any of the book covers below to view them on hoopla.

- **Paola Santiago and the River of Tears**
  by Kay Mejia
  Ages 10+
  Miss Alyssa

- **Woodland Dreams**
  by Karen Jameson
  Ages 0-5
  Miss Alyssa
The Classics Book Club
The End of the Affair by Graham Greene
Monday, Feb 1st | 7-8:30pm | Zoom
Discussion moderated by Readers Advisory Librarian Cindy Haiken
During World War II, novelist Maurice Bendrix has an adulterous affair with Sarah Miles. When Bendrix is almost killed by a bomb, Sarah suddenly ends their relationship. Looking back a year after Sarah’s death, Bendrix attempts to understand what happened by retracing the course of their romance. Published in 1951, Graham Greene’s novel was reviewed as “singularly moving and beautiful.”

To participate, contact Cindy Haiken at chaiken@wallingfordlibrary.org.

Mystery Book Group
The Real Cool Killers by Chester Himes
Wednesday, Feb 3rd | 3-4:15pm | Zoom
Discussion moderated by Author Carole Shmurak
Ulysses Galen, a white man “slumming” in Harlem, is attacked in a bar by a black man with a knife; fleeing outside, he attracts the attention of a man named Pickens, who is high on marijuana. Pickens proceeds to run after Galen while shooting. Detectives Grave Digger Jones and Coffin Ed Johnson arrive to find Galen shot to death in the street, and they arrest Pickens. However, a Harlem street gang calling themselves the Real Cool Moslems (really teenagers in fake beards) cause a distraction and spirit Pickens away. The detectives realize that the gun they confiscated from Pickens is a movie prop that only shoots blanks; they must now recover Pickens and also find out who really shot Galen, and why.

Moderated by Carole Shmurak, author of 11 books and Professor Emerita at Central Connecticut State University. To participate, contact Carole at cshmurak@gmail.com.

Thursday Night Book Club
The Dakota Winters by Tom Barbash
Thursday, Feb 18th | 6:30-8pm | Zoom
Discussion moderated by Readers Advisory Librarian Cindy Haiken
In the fall of 1979, 23-year-old Anton Winter returns to New York City from a stint with the Peace Corps in Africa. Over the course of a year, he works for Ted Kennedy’s presidential campaign, goes sailing with his neighbor, John Lennon, and helps his father, who walked off the set of his highly-rated talk show two years ago, attempt a comeback. Tom Barbash’s nostalgic and bittersweet novel captures the power of family bonds at a time when New York City was on the cusp of change.

To participate, contact Cindy Haiken at chaiken@wallingfordlibrary.org.

SCOW Presenta: Club de Lectura en Español!
(Latin Book Club)
La Casa de los Espíritus (The House of the Spirits) by Isabel Allende
Jueves, 25 de Febrero | 7-8pm | Zoom
Úsese a Daisy Lopez de la Comunidad Hispana de Wallingford para una discusión de lectura, totalmente en español!
Esteban Trueba es un humilde ciudadano que parte rumbo a las minas para ganar suficiente dinero como para poder casarse con su amada, Rosa del Valle, una hermosa mujer con pelo verde. Durante su ausencia, Rosa muere envenenada por equivocación: los del partido político rivales a Severo del Valle, su padre, lo querían asesinar a él para que no fuese elegido. Esteban es de carácter fuerte, y constantemente padece ataques de ira, ansiedad y violencia. Sufre mucho cuando Rosa muere, y decide ir a reconstruir completamente Las Tres Marias, una vieja hacienda abandonada por su padre para olvidarse de su amada y hacerse rico. Diez años más tarde, ha conseguido reconstruir toda la finca y, a pesar de que ha mejorado enormemente las condiciones de vida de los empleados, su trato despótico y sus constantes abusos despiertan el silencioso resentimiento de más de un trabajador.
Para participar, contacta a Daisy Lopez a dlopez@scowinc.org o llame a la Comunidad Hispana de Wallingford (203-265-5866).
Ways to Stay Calm and Centered
Tuesday, Feb 2nd | 7-8pm | Zoom | Registration required | Click to register
Daily life can be busy, hectic and at times overwhelming. Juggling many priorities and having your attention being pulled in all directions can leave you feeling stretched thin. The good news is that small, smart changes over time can make a big difference. Join Zorayda Cocchi, OTR/L, RYT for this practical workshop to learn some simple techniques that will help you feel more centered and find more peace and calmness in everyday life. Prior to the program you will receive an invitation to the Zoom meeting.

Are You Smarter than a Librarian? Virtual Trivia Night
Tuesday, Feb 9th | 7-8pm | Zoom | Registration required | Click to register
Team up with family and friends or play alone! We will be accepting 15 teams, but individuals are welcome to play as their own team! Only one registration per team. Prior to the program you will receive an invitation to the Zoom meeting along with instructions on how to play.

Wallingford Writers Community
Saturday, Feb 20th | 2-4pm | Zoom | No registration required
Join the Wallingford Writers Community and discover how the fellowship of other writers can help you pursue your writing goals! All meetings include dedicated writing time, craft techniques for fiction and literary nonfiction, and the opportunity to share work in a supportive, creative forum.

To participate, contact Leah Farrell at lfarrell@wallingfordlibrary.org.

One-on-One Career Counseling
Sign up today to schedule your appointment with our career specialist Sarah Eiseman!

Get personalized help with crafting a resume or cover letter or preparing for your big interview. Click here to get started or contact Leah Farrell at lfarrell@wallingfordlibrary.org. You will be contacted shortly to schedule your appointment.
Take Home Kits

Register for one of our fun take-home kits to make on your own. Kits include most supplies and written directions. Please select your pickup date on the registration form. Kit registration opens at 7am on Jan 22nd. Your kit will be available for you on the Supply Kits table outside the rear entrance from 10am to 6pm if you choose a weekday or from 10am to 12noon if you choose a Saturday.

Valentine’s Day Card
Make your own Valentine’s Day card using decorations precut on our Cricut Maker machine! Decorate your card with hearts, letters, and other fun shapes! Feel free to add on with any supplies you have at home to customize your card and make it personal. Click to reserve a kit.

Beginner’s Origami
Origami is the art of paper folding and this kit will get you started on some origami projects. Kits include origami paper and written instructions for a few projects. Click to reserve a kit.

Mini Tensegrity Table
What is Tensegrity? Per Wikipedia: “Tensegrity, tensional integrity or floating compression is a structural principle based on a system of isolated components under compression inside a network of continuous tension, and arranged in such a way that the compressed members (usually bars or struts) do not touch each other while the pre-stressed tensioned members (usually cables or tendons) delineate the system spatially.” You may be asking, what does this mean? Essentially, Tensegrity is a style of construction that can make things look like they are magically floating in the air. Learn all about Tensegrity, build your own Mini Tensegrity Table, and see it in action with this STEM kit! Click to reserve a kit.

No-Sew Fleece Pillow
Learn a new technique for creating decorative, braided edge throw pillow covers without a sewing machine. Participants will need to provide their own scissors and ruler. Click to reserve a kit.

Virtual Programs

Registration is required for all programs unless otherwise noted. Registration begins at 7am on the 22nd of the month prior. Collaboratory programs are open to adults and teens in grades 9+ unless otherwise noted. Once registered for a virtual program, you will receive an invitation to the Zoom meeting via email on the day of the event.

Talking TED @ Home
Thursday, Feb 11th | 7-8pm | Adults | Registration required | Zoom | Click to register
Join librarian Cindy Haiken on Zoom to watch and discuss a popular TED talk. Once registered, you will receive an invitation to the Zoom meeting via email on the day of the event. In February, we will watch and discuss Matt Walker’s “Sleep is Your Superpower.”

Sleep is your life-support system and Mother Nature’s best effort yet at immortality, says sleep scientist Matt Walker. In this deep dive into the science of slumber, Walker shares the wonderfully good things that happen when you get sleep -- and the alarmingly bad things that happen when you don’t, for both your brain and body. Learn more about sleep’s impact on your learning, memory, immune system and even your genetic code -- as well as some helpful tips for getting some shut-eye.

Introduction to Ancestry: Library Edition
Wednesday, Feb 24th | 7-8pm | Adults | Registration required | Zoom | Click to register
For a limited time Ancestry: Library Edition is available for home access with your Wallingford Public Library card! Join this class to learn some tips and tricks on how to best search Ancestry.com so you can utilize this valuable genealogy tool from the comfort of your own home. Learn how to search Census, military, birth and death records, and more.
Resume, Interview, and (Un)Employment Help

Are you currently in the middle of a job search or looking to revise your resume and brush up on your interview skills? The library subscribes to a virtual service called JobNow that may be able to help you!

Get started by accessing lots of resume templates to start drafting a new resume or reformatting your current resume. Resume resources are available to help you find the best template and quality sample resumes are ready to view to help you with your own! Once you complete your resume, you can submit it to the Resume Lab to have a professional review it and get back to you with advice or critiques. Live expert help is also available from 3-11pm on weekdays!

Once you’ve ironed out your resume it’s time to prepare for potential interviews! JobNow has tips on delivering a strong interview as well as additional resources to help you out. When you think you’re ready to practice, live interview coaches are on hand to perform a mock interview or give further advice on improving your performance.

In addition to resume and job interview help, JobNow also provides live job coaching to help you through other aspects of the employment process. JobNow’s Career Assessment, SkillSurfer and Parachute services are also available to help you match your skillset and interests with the right career for you.

If you are currently unemployed, JobNow will also provide live help with how to begin the job search and what to do in the meantime. Unemployment resources are just clicks away. JobNow even lets you browse job listings by position, salary, and location without having to visit multiple other websites for job postings.

You can access JobNow here (walpublib.org/2Rhh2KN) by signing in with your library card. If you have any questions on how to use JobNow, give us a call at (203) 265-6754.

Not sure what to read next?

While all of our librarians (and especially Readers Advisory Librarian, Cindy Haiken) can help you find your next book, the library also subscribes to a service called NoveList Plus which you can use to find books on your own! You can start using NoveList by doing a quick search by typing in some keywords of your interests such as “Japan 1930 Women” and NoveList’s search engine will look for books that match your terms. However, NoveList is especially useful for its advanced search and readalike options.

In a NoveList advanced search you can specify an age range, a reading level, a word count, audiobook length, and even an author’s gender or nationality. This search tool makes it especially easy to find, say, books by black authors for Black History Month (February) or books by women for Women’s History Month (March).

In addition to advanced searches, NoveList also has a readalike tool. For instance, did you really enjoy Where the Crawdads sing by Delia Owens? If you visit the book’s record on NoveList and scroll down past the book reviews you will find a series of check boxes. You can tick off various check boxes to find similar book recommendations. Did you like that the book took place in North Carolina in the 1960s? Check off those boxes. Did you also like that it was character-driven or leisurely paced? Check off either of those boxes too and let NoveList work its magic to find other books you might enjoy! For instance, if you checked off all those boxes mentioned, NoveList would suggest reading Nightwoods by Charles Frazier next!

Don’t have a particular readalike book in mind, but know what you like in a book? That’s fine too! NoveList has a service called appeal mixer. Use categories like pacing, tone, and character to help narrow your search. As an example, if you look for a fast-paced, darkly humorous story featuring an LGBTQ character, NoveList will help you narrow your search down to 25 book suggestions.

After you’ve found some books you might like to read, you can create a folder to save the suggested title in for later. It’s perfect for when you have a reading drought and need to break out the emergency reserves!

You can access NoveList here (walpublib.org/3swa8TN) by signing in with your library card. If you have any questions on how to use NoveList, give us a call at (203) 265-6754.
Polymer Clay Tiny Food with Deb Jaffe  
Monday, Feb 8th | 5pm | Grades 6-12 | Zoom | Registration Required | [Click to register]  
Join polymer clay chef Deb Jaffe for a fun, creative tiny food class. Each participant will create a sandwich and charcuterie (cheese and meat plate) which will fit on a nickel, an entrée, and a rainbow cake which would make Chef Buddy say wow! All items will be doll house sized, crafted from POLYMER CLAY! Not edible but adorable for sure! Most materials will be provided via a kit pickup. Some easily available household items will be required.

Introduction to Babysitting  
Saturday, Feb 27th | 10am-1pm | Grades 5-12 | Zoom | Registration Required | [Click to register]  
Babysitters have the responsibility of caring for children and making important decisions while they are in charge to keep not only the child safe but themselves as well. Parents entrust their child with the babysitter, therefore, it is crucial he or she knows the basics of child care. In this Introduction to Babysitting Course, participants will learn interviewing tips, communication skills, ages and stages of young babies and toddlers, safety and first aid tips, and feeding and caring for children, including diaper changing.

In addition, with heightened precautions due to COVID-19, babysitters will learn steps he or she can take to decrease the spread of the virus as suggested by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Such precautions include taking their temperature, wearing gloves and a mask, using hand sanitizer, and washing hands regularly. Participants will also learn symptoms to look for.

The instructor, Amanda Lisk, has taught Kindergarten and 2nd grade and is currently a 1st grade teacher. She holds three teacher certifications including Early Childhood, General Education and Special Education and a Master’s Degree in Literacy.

All participants will receive a certificate of completion. Registration is required in order to receive the Zoom link.

Join the LION MINECRAFT Server!  
- Since we are all hanging out virtually, join us on the library’s private Minecraft server! Test your survival skills in the latest survival world, challenge yourself to custom obstacle courses, or build to your heart’s content in a creative world—even visit a replica of the library! The Minecraft server is for grades 6-12. You must have a PC edition and a Mojang account to join. Apply to join: bit.ly/2XH7QTC
The Ends by Chris Cierniewski

The past year will be remembered by those who lived through it as possibly being the closest the world has come to feeling apocalyptic. Apocalypses have captivated the imagination of writers since the dawn of the written word. During the library’s annual March Madness competition, we are taking a look at some fictional apocalypses from literature and screen. (Info on how to participate in the competition on Page 2)

Some of the contenders are so well-known they require little introduction. The Matrix and The Terminator were two box-office hits that showcased a world overtaken by artificial intelligence machines, either harvesting humanity or bent on wiping them out. These two films have become staples of fiction featuring technological singularity—the point at which technology becomes irreversibly more intelligent than humans.

At the complete opposite end of the spectrum are zombie or zombie-like apocalypses such as The Walking Dead, Shaun of the Dead, and The Last of Us, which see humanity subdued not by a more intelligent sentence, but by the lack of sentence itself. While some of these stories involve the search for a cure for whatever is causing the zombie uprising, most just feature a complete breakdown of society because of an unstoppable force of choke that is constantly being fed by the living. Attack on Titan adds its own flair to the zombie genre by using seemingly mindless grotesque giant beings hellbent on destroying the last of humanity.

Of course there are also the perrenital favorite alien invasion stories. Independence Day’s visuals of UFOs hovering over and destroying famous landmarks have become iconic. However, every alien invasion story seems to take some inspiration from H. G. Wells’s classic, The War of the Worlds which has also seen countless reimaginings and retellings itself. Ironically, in many versions of the story, the giant all-powerful aliens are wiped out by the simplest of means: a virus.

When not saving us from alien invasions, viruses play a large role in apocalyptic fiction too. Michael Crichton’s The Andromeda Strain famously features scientists contending with the discovery and outbreak of an alien virus while Stephen King’s The Stand deals with a weaponized virus. Emily St. John Mandel’s Station Eleven depicts a group of actors trying to return arts and humanity back to a society devastated by a pandemic. Jake Burt’s middle grade novel Cleo Porter and the Body Electric may be the most relateable virus story at the moment. It features a family in quarantine during a pandemic accidentally receiving medication critical for another individual’s survival.

A spin on the pandemic genre is the altered DNA end times. P.D. James’ Children of Men speculates on what humanity would do if we were no longer able to produce offspring and Edgar Wright’s Y: The Last Man ponders what it would be like if all Y-chromosome organisms (that is, males) were wiped out except one.

Sometimes the actual catalyst for the apocalypse is unclear or irrelevant to the story. Waterworld and Mad Max both explore anarchist societies in extreme climates of endless ocean or desert respectively. J.G. Ballard’s climate change classic The Drowned World features an expedition from the only remaining hospitable landmass, Greenland, into a swampy London reclaimed by nature where scientists are slowly driven insane. Jeanne DuPrau’s The City of Ember goes in the opposite direction with a single authoritarian city and no other civilization in sight. Cormac McCarthy’s The Road offers no explanation for its apocalypse and instead chooses to focus on the relationship of a father and son enduring the fallout and collapse of society into anarchy. In contrast, Tom Perrotta’s The Leftovers and Ling Ma’s Severence feature characters and societies who attempt to keep chugging along even in the face of great loss or disaster and in defiance of any new world order.

José Saramago’s Blindness and Josh Malerman’s Bird Box form an excellent apocalyptic couplet. Blindness explores what might happen if all of society suddenly went blind whereas Bird Box presents a world in which characters must remain blindfolded or risk seeing an unknown, ever-present entity which would drive them to insanity and suicide.

Sometimes the apocalypse is imminent, but the time between the realization and the end is what provides the tension. Nevil Shute’s On the Beach chronicles the last few weeks of a group of Australians waiting for an impending radiactive wave. They must choose whether to spend their last days in grief or hedonism, together or alone, waiting for the final seconds or choosing to induce their death early. On a more personal level, the film Melancholia sees two sisters dealing with the approaching collision of Earth with another planet. The two sisters have starkly different personalities and handle the knowledge of their eventual destruction in vastly different ways. Almost included in this year’s March Madness was Kurt Vonnegut’s Cat’s Cradle in which a created chemical known as Ice-Nine has the potential to freeze the planet. Instead of characters just waiting for this to occur however, the novel tells the story of a darkly humorous race for control of the chemical.

The apocalypse has always had a religious aspect too. Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchet’s Good Omens tells the story of an angel and demon who have been living among mortals since The Beginning. They are charged with bringing about the biblical apocalypse even though they are fond of Earth. Similarly, Simon Rich’s What in God’s Name (adapted as Miracle Workers for screen) showcases a God (CEO of Heaven Inc.) who is done with Earth, who wants to move onto the next thing (a celestial Thai restaurant), and who has decided to blow Earth up. The angels employed at Heaven Inc. have made a deal with their boss that if they can answer an “impossible prayer” he’ll spare Earth.

Finally there is the video game Horizon Zero Dawn which borrows tropes from many of the aforementioned apocalypses, but creates something entirely new. After an unknown cataclysm, society has reverted back to tribe-like communities in a world retaken by nature—and also giant animal-like machines which have only recently become hostile. Something in the main character Aloy’s DNA gives her alone the ability to unlock secured doors from the old world. As the story progresses plot threads involving Aloy’s genetics, climate change, corporate greed, artificial intelligence, religious extremism, cultural evolution, and zombie machines all weave together to create an original, shocking, and hopeful reveal about the end of the world.
Sure, this will probably end up being another in a long line of emotionally crippling misadventures...
but let’s try to have some fun along the way.

—Brian K. Vaughan, *Y: The Last Man*